

This is not a question of whether we want to beat terrorists. This is a question of whether we are doing it the right way and whether we know how to do this right.

Show me in this resolution, in this amendment, where it says all troops out in 1 year. It doesn't. A lot of people are upset at that. They think it ought to, but it doesn't. Show me where it says we are finished altogether, and we are walking away from Iraq. It does not say it.

It says we are going to leave sufficient people there to finish the training, to go after al-Qaida, over the horizon to have the capacity to be able to protect our interests in the region, and it says we will protect American facilities.

This is not cut and run. This is a smart way to win the war on terror. Our own generals—and I know the chairman has heard it; I know others have heard it—know that they believe our presence is contributing to the problems. It contributes to the sense of occupation. It contributes to the—whether it is Abu Ghraib or Guantanamo Bay or Haditha, those all contribute to the recruitment of terrorists against the United States.

Our intelligence people will tell every Member of the Senate that currently there are al-Qaida-trained operatives leaving Iraq, trained in munitions, trained in IEDs, going to Europe and elsewhere in order to wreak the havoc of the future.

We are not doing the job. We are not doing the job correctly. Let's have a real debate, not a false debate, about something this resolution is not.

Moreover, in listening to my colleagues, one of them talked about what his vote meant and the vote he casts to hold Saddam Hussein accountable. I remember what my vote was. I remember what I said in the Senate when I voted. I voted reluctantly based on what Colin Powell, Secretary of State, and others said they were going to do: Exhaust the remedies of inspections at the United Nations, not cut them short; go to war as a last resort, not as a rush; do the adequate planning, not ignore the State Department plan for what you do to win the peace.

I hear colleagues come to the Senate and say: We shouldn't tell this administration what to do. Their record demands that we tell them what to do. Congress helped get us into this mess, and Congress ought to help get us out of it. We are partly responsible.

I have heard my colleagues talk about troops they talk to. We all talk to troops. We have all talked to families. I will be honest about it, I hear both things. I hear troops whose families have said to me: Make sure my son or daughter did not die in vain. I agree with what the Senator from Wisconsin said earlier about that. I think anyone who serves their country at the call of the Nation never dies in vain.

I have heard troops who have come back and said to me: We are making

progress. We ought to be doing more of this, more of that, more of the PRTs, more of a number of different other projects. But I have also met a lot of troops who are coming back who believe they do not know what the mission is; they think the war is wrong and they think a lot of the troops just want to come home. That is where they are. It is a mixture.

Our question, our judgment, is to try to see through that, try to be intelligent and genuine in trying to work out what is the best policy. I have come to the conclusion that the reason for setting a date—I was not there 2 years ago. Why wasn't I there 2 years ago? Because 2 years ago we didn't have all the elections, we did not have a referendum, we did not have the Constitution, we did not have an elected government, we had not made some of the progress, and we had not transitioned to a civil sectarian struggle. We then still saw things as fundamentally foreign jihadists. Because of all the mistakes that have been made, that transition is now a matter of history.

I believe deeply, based on what I am hearing from military personnel, based on what I see personally, and based on my own experience where I fought with foreigners in another country, where we were trying to stand them up and get them to go out and do the job, that as long as we are there and prepared to do the job for them, they won't do it adequately. You have to push people out into that kind of situation.

The bottom line, can we do it the way we are muddling along? Possibly. I heard a couple of colleagues come to the Senate and say there were some who have decided that this is lost and we just have to go. I haven't. I believe there are ways, hopefully, to pull something together that has a sufficiently stable government that we can go forward to the other issues of the Middle East.

I will tell you this, and this I know for certain: If we make this successful muddling along, as we are doing now, it is going to cost us more lives, more limbs, and more dollars than if we did what is in this plan. That I know to a certainty. I also know to a certainty that unless we are prepared to do the diplomacy necessary, we cannot resolve the fundamental underpinnings of this insurgency.

I talked to General Zinni the other day to ask his advice. He doesn't agree with me setting a date, so I will be upfront about that, but he certainly cited unbelievable dismay at the lack of adequacy of consultation in the region, at the lack of effort to put together a regional security arrangement, at the lack of diplomacy that is trying to resolve the fundamental differences and work bilaterally in an intensive way to pull people to the table to try to deal with this.

One thing I know, when you have a 20-percent minority Sunni population who for 200 years has run the country

and now suddenly they are not, but some of them are still committed to doing it, if you do not give them a sufficient stake, you are not going to resolve this problem. And, at the same time, you have the Shias who are 60 percent of the population who for 200 years have been oppressed by this 20 percent minority, and they won at the ballot box because we gave them at the ballot box the opportunity to have power, and they want to hold on to it. That is natural.

But if they want to go the full distance of what they want to do, we have a serious long-term problem. That is what we are supposed to resolve in the next few months.

The Senator from Delaware is absolutely correct in his description of the tensions that have to be resolved. I disagree with the Senator with respect to the question of whether there is a plan. This amendment is a plan. It is a plan for standing up the Iraqis. It is a plan for creating accountability. It is a plan for shifting responsibility to the Iraqi Government to bolster their sovereignty and empower the Government in the eyes of the Iraqi people. It is a plan for how to begin to redeploy troops to protect our interests in the region at the same time as you stand up their military. And, most importantly, it is a plan for what you do with the Arab League, with the Secretary General of the United Nations, with the neighbors and with the factions in Iraq in order to resolve the fundamental differences. It specifically requires reaching a comprehensive political agreement for Iraq that engenders the support of Sunnis, Shias, and Kurds and ensures equitable distribution of oil, strengthens the internal security, disbans militias, revives reconstruction efforts, fulfills related international economic aid commitments, secures Iraq's borders, and provides for a sustainable Federalist structure in Iraq.

That is a plan. And the only way to arrive at any plan, whether it is the Senator from Delaware or anyone else, is to pull the parties together and do the diplomacy necessary. Never in the 21 years I have been here have I seen as significant an issue of war and peace, life and death, as significant an absence of fundamental diplomacy as there is here. Never. It does not come close to the efforts of other generations.

There is 200 years of American history being turned topsy-turvy. It is hurting us on the war on terror. When September 11 happened, the whole world was with us—the whole world. Newspaper headlines said: We are all Americans now. That was the atmosphere after September 11. And the whole world understood why we had to go to Afghanistan. And every single one of us voted for that, understood it, and supported it.

But Iraq is different. Iraq had nothing to do with Afghanistan at the time, nothing to do with September 11, and everyone knows it.